

900,000 newly laid-off Americans in 1 week alone.

Senators on both sides know what we need to do. In the springtime, when the country needed a bridge, we passed the largest rescue package in American history on a unanimous, bipartisan basis. Now what Americans need is another bridge. Fortunately, this time we do not need a bridge over an unknown and frightening future but a bridge through the next several months, while the lifesaving vaccines can flow throughout our country.

Frontline healthcare workers are receiving the vaccine as we speak. Yesterday, Vice President PENCE, Speaker PELOSI, and I all received first doses of vaccines pursuant to preexisting plans for the continuity of our government.

These vaccines are safe. They are effective. They are our Nation's path out of this hellish chapter. So the first lines of the cavalry are already arriving. We just need to help American families hold on while reinforcements continue to pour in: more paycheck protection loans for the hardest hit businesses, more additional Federal unemployment aid, more direct assistance for families, a lot more funding for K-12 schools to reopen safely and get our kids' educations back on track, and, perhaps most important of all, a huge amount of funding for vaccine distribution so that we aren't just helping Americans endure this battle, but we are helping them win the battle as fast as possible.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, we extended government funding for 2 additional days. The Senate and the House need to finalize another rescue package containing all the policies I just named and many more. We need to finalize government funding legislation for next year, and we need to pass these measures with a big, bipartisan vote and get them signed into law without further delay.

We need cooperation and focus from all sides. There is a kind of gravitational pull here in Congress, where, unless we are careful, any major negotiation can easily slide into an unending catalogue of disagreements. Let's guard against that.

The American people have already waited for more assistance longer than they could afford. In my judgment, they have waited far too long for a relief package of the same general size and scope that Senate Republicans have been proposing literally since last summer. Every one of us in the Senate and the House represent American families who simply cannot wait any longer for Congress to conclude these discussions. Every day that we delay may very well cost more small businesses their survival, cost more American workers their jobs, and, yes, cost more Americans their very lives.

We have had productive discussions this week. I appreciate the good-faith

spirit that has characterized my talks with the Democratic leader, Speaker PELOSI, Leader MCCARTHY, and Secretary Mnuchin, but the American people cannot feed their families or pay their bills with Congress's good-faith discussions. They need us to act. We need to conclude our talks, draft legislation, and land this plane.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

##### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk shall report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

##### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

##### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, ever since a remarkable bipartisan rescue package in March, the CARES Act, and a subsequent bill to replenish those programs, getting further aid to the American people has been a long and arduous effort. It is no secret that for much of the year, our Republican colleagues were opposed to spending any more money to help the American people during a once-in-a-century pandemic. Thankfully, the Republican leadership recently accepted the bipartisan Gang of 8's framework as the basis for negotiations for an emergency bill, which Speaker PELOSI and I have suggested, unlocking the current round of talks.

Even now, at the end of this painstaking process, there have been some final hurdles. Crafting a \$1 trillion relief package over the matter of a few days was always going to have its difficulties, but we are running out of time.

After passing yet another continuing resolution yesterday evening, we have

until Sunday at midnight to secure a final agreement, draft the legislation, and move it through both Chambers of Congress with alacrity. I agree with the Republican leader on this: We need to deliver an outcome and deliver it quickly.

We continue to make progress. I believe there is good faith from all four corners of congressional leadership to finalize an agreement very soon. Even though there are several issues that haven't been closed out yet, we continue to make good progress on all issues but one.

The No. 1 outstanding issue is a proposal by the Republican Senator from Pennsylvania. This proposal is a new entrant. It hadn't been an important feature of our negotiations over the past few weeks. Only in the past few days have Senator TOOMEY and Senator MCCONNELL introduced this specific provision and made it clear they feel strongly about it.

Senator TOOMEY's new proposal would potentially prohibit the Treasury and the Fed from setting up new emergency lending facilities moving forward, greatly reducing their ability to respond to economic crises. Again, this is something that materialized only in the past few days and would leave the Treasury and the Fed with less authority than it had even prior to the pandemic.

Quite simply, Senator TOOMEY's proposal would do more than just prevent the next Treasury Secretary and Fed Chair from using the emergency lending programs that saved our economy and stabilized markets back in March and April. It could potentially prevent them from setting up new facilities that look, or even smell like, those programs moving forward.

Democrats do not agree with it. Economists from across the political spectrum warned that Senator TOOMEY's legislation would cripple our government's ability to respond to a deteriorating economy. The Chair of the Federal Reserve, Jay Powell, hardly a flaming liberal, is likewise strongly opposed to the Toomey provision.

Senator TOOMEY's proposal goes way beyond what Leader MCCONNELL proposed in his HEALS Act. The worry that this Toomey proposal is supposed to address is the need to prevent the Treasury and Fed from using their authority willy-nilly to do whatever the new President wanted. That worry is unfounded. In order to create a new emergency facility under the present law, you would need the support of Chairman Powell, a conservative man, and the five members of the Fed Board, a conservative body.

Under current law, an emergency lending facility could get approval only in a true emergency. Senator TOOMEY's legislation creates barriers to emergency lending that go far beyond current law and tries to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

Publicly, Senator TOOMEY—I read an article in POLITICO—has expressed his